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THE SITUATION IN BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA

SECURITY COUNCIL
Forty-seventh year

Letter dated 31 August 1992 from the Permanent Representative of Cyprus to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

I have the honour to refer to a letter dated 26 August 1992, addressed to you by the Permanent Representative of Turkey (with an annex) and circulated as a document of the General Assembly, under agenda items 45 and 150, and of the Security Council (A/46/964-S/24490) in response to my statement in the General Assembly on the situation in Bosnia and Herzegovina, on 24 August 1992.

The relevant part of that statement is as follows:

"The unfortunate and indeed tragic fact is that the odious and abhorrent policy of "ethnic cleansing" is not a new phenomenon, nor did it originate in Bosnia. We in Cyprus have had bitter experience in this regard. We have witnessed equally grave violations of international humanitarian law, as attested to by the European Commission of Human Rights, not only during the 1974 invasion but also in 1975 with the enclaved 20,000 Greek Cypriots in the Karpass, of whom now less than 500 remain.

"To quote from a major editorial from the respected Financial Times newspaper, on 16 July 1992, under the heading 'They must be stopped':

'A State recognized by most other States and admitted to numerous international bodies is being dismembered. Frontiers are being redrawn by war. Large numbers of people are being forcibly driven from their homes, with widespread killing. Such actions

would be intolerable at any time or place, but in many times and places have been tolerated. A particularly clear precedent was set in Cyprus in 1974. There, too, a neighbouring State, Turkey, intervened to protect a minority and used military force to secure an area for that minority's exclusive use, expelling from it all members of the majority community. There, too, the international community failed to take any effective action or reverse the process. But "stopping the fighting" is not enough if it turns out to mean, as in Cyprus, consolidating a cease-fire only after the aggressor has secured his objectives and then being content to urge the virtue of negotiations and concessions equally on both sides.'

"I shall refrain from going any further at this point, as the issues involved are fully documented in the records of past debates in the United Nations and I do not want to deflect attention from the item we are now considering.

"My Government's policy has been and continues to be to cooperate fully and with good will with the Secretary-General in sincerely seeking a just and lasting solution to the problem of Cyprus. President Vassiliou has amply demonstrated this policy in the past and very recently, and the same sincere effort will continue when the talks resume later this year. But it is essential for Turkey and all concerned to recognize that, if these talks are to bear fruit, the present inequitable division of territory cannot continue and the right of the displaced persons to return to their homes and property cannot be negated.

"This is a valid proposition in Bosnia and Herzegovina and it is an equally valid proposition in Cyprus. In the case of Bosnia, even Mr. Karadjic is reported to have declared over the weekend that 'all the refugees must be allowed to return home' and that 'all property handed over under duress will have to be returned'. Whether one accepts these declarations at face value or not, can there be any reasonable person who can disagree with these principles, and is it too much to hope that the same principles are also applicable to Cyprus?

"It is to be hoped that Turkey, which has taken a leading role in protecting those who suffer in Bosnia, will at long last play a constructive role also in the search for a just and lasting solution to the tragic problem my own country has been confronted with and suffered from for too long, a solution within the letter and spirit of the numerous applicable United Nations resolutions which so far have remained unimplemented. There should be no double standard."

This statement, and the quotation from the main editorial of 16 July 1992 of the authoritative British newspaper the Financial Times, are clear and require no elaboration. Far from revealing "deep-seated hostility to the Turkish Cypriots", as is falsely alleged, it is a factual and sad reminder of our experience of "ethnic cleansing" applied as a deliberate policy by Turkey

in the occupied part of Cyprus following the 1974 invasion and its parallel to the tragic situation in Bosnia and Herzegovina today.

For want of valid arguments, in response to the substantive issue raised, the Turkish representative resorts to false accusations by proxy. I would not follow his example and resort to polemics.

But it should be pointed out that this is yet another instance of the abuse of the process of circulation of United Nations official documents by the Turkish Mission in the name of an entity recognized by no member of the international community, other than Turkey itself, and which was rightly described in Security Council resolutions 541 (1983) of 18 November 1983 and 550 (1984) of 11 May 1984 as "legally invalid" and a "secessionist entity", resolutions unanimously and significantly reaffirmed by the Security Council in resolution 774 (1992) as recently as 26 August 1992. It was by the same resolution 541 (1983) that the Security Council called upon all States "not to recognize any Cypriot State other than the Republic of Cyprus". Yet Turkey persists in abusing the right to request the circulation of Security Council documents using the name of that unrecognized entity which the Security Council itself described and continues to regard as "legally invalid" and "secessionist".

As I stressed in my above-cited statement, my Government's policy has been and continues to be to cooperate fully and with good will with the Secretary-General in sincerely seeking a just and lasting solution to the problem of Cyprus. It is our hope that when the talks resume later this year Turkey will at long last play a constructive role in this regard. We have long held the conviction that a just and lasting solution to the tragic problem my country has been confronted with for too long would be to the benefit of all concerned, including Turkey, to the interest of all the people of Cyprus and for peace in our volatile region.

I should be grateful if the text of the present letter would be circulated as a document of the General Assembly, under agenda items 45 and 150, and of the Security Council.

(Signed) Andreas J. JACOVIDES
Ambassador
Permanent Representative